Shirley Jackson Case

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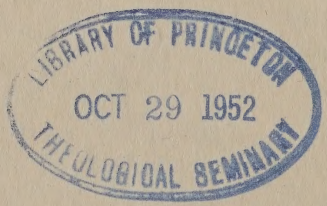

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The bibliography & biography
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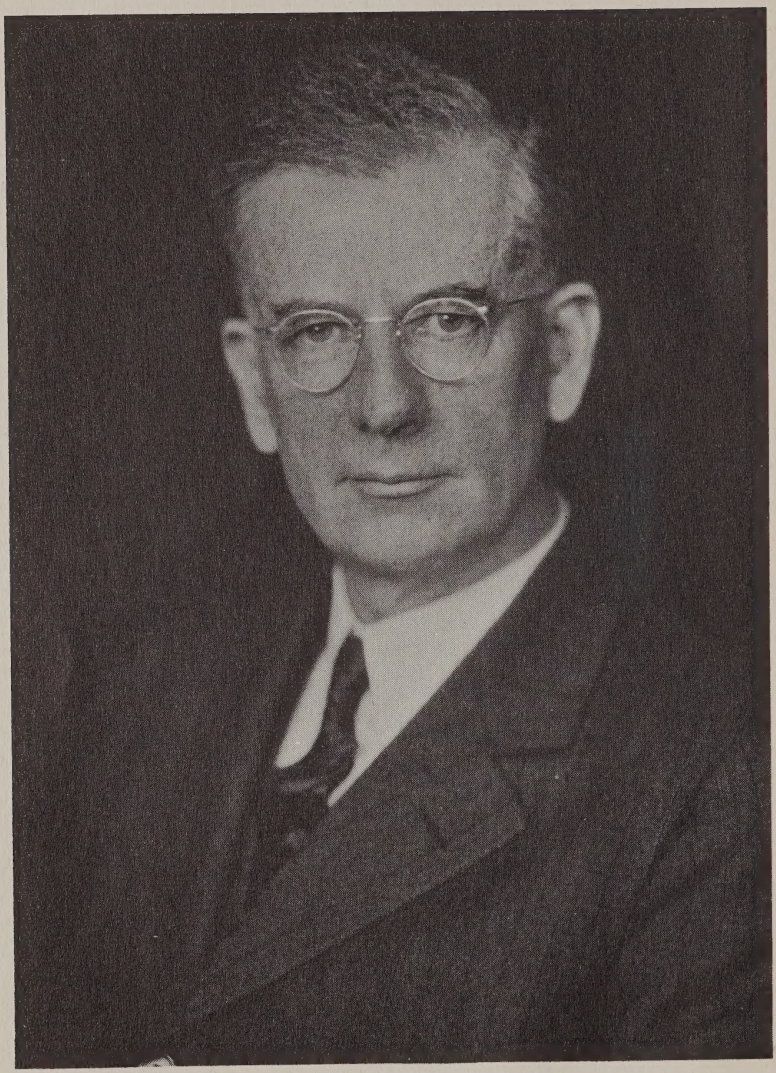

Shirley Jackson Case

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The Bibliography & Biography of Shirley Jackson Case

By

LOUIS B. JENNINGS

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Introduction

NO SOONER had the Case Memorial Number of the *Journal of Religion* appeared at the beginning of this year than we began to receive requests for reprints of the extraordinary "Bibliography of the Writings of Shirley Jackson Case." For the most part these requests came—as would be expected—from students of the New Testament or of early Christian history. Expressed desires of this sort simply cannot be allowed to go unheeded. That is the explanation of this modest publication, which combines, for the first time, the bibliography of Shirley Jackson Case with his equally significant and exceptional biography.

Louis B. Jennings, the author of this combined biography-bibliography, is a younger disciple of Dean Case, of the *Epigoni* rather than of the *Diadochi* group. At present he is vigorously engaging in an eminently Casean type of activity as professor of Bible and religion in Marshall College at Huntington, West Virginia. Also he is director of religious activities on the Marshall campus—in itself a full-time function for one man. Professor Jennings readily asserts that the work he did on the biography and the bibliography of Dean Case was first-class preparation for his present responsibilities.

Personal association of a most unusual sort attaches to both the biography and the bibliography. Each of these items was prepared for presentation to Dean Case himself in celebration of his seventy-fifth birthday on September 28, 1947. We are very glad to say that the first typewritten copies of the two records were in his hands on that occasion. He corrected them with the meticulous accuracy that was habitual to him. Also he added a few in-

valuable annotations here and there, and then he returned the copies to Chicago with a covering letter that was well spiced with his own unique variety of piquant humor. That was the last letter we received from him. Just over a month later he stepped from his classroom into the future.

As we intimated at the outset, the bibliography, which is Part I of this monograph, was first published in the Case Memorial Number of the *Journal of Religion* (Vol. XXIX, No. 1) for January, 1949. We are very grateful to Director William T. Couch of the University of Chicago Press and to Professors Bernard E. Meland and James H. Nichols, coeditors of the *Journal of Religion,* for generous permission to reprint the bibliography, this time in appropriate combination with the biography. Incidentally it should be noted that the complete bibliography, here rendered in full, considerably expands the convenient and timely compilation made by Professor Allan Cabaniss of the University of Mississippi for the Case *Festschrift, Environmental Factors in Christian History,* which was published a decade ago by the University of Chicago Press.

Similarly the biography, which constitutes Part II of this monograph, was first published by the Baptist Historical Society of America in their quarterly journal, *The Chronicle* (Vol. XI, No. 3), for July, 1948. We are particularly grateful to Professor R. E. E. Harkness of Crozer Theological Seminary for editorial permission to reprint the biography, here in appropriate juxtaposition with the phenomenal record of Dean Case's own publications.

Dean Case himself we would now hail in words familiar from many early Christian inscriptions, which he knew so very well:

℣ IN · DEO · VIVES ℟

HAROLD R. WILLOUGHBY

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
September 28, 1949

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II The Biography

ON SEPTEMBER 28, 1872, Shirley Jackson Case was born at Hatfield Point, New Brunswick, Canada, to George F. and Maria (Jackson) Case. His birth occurred in a small village at the head of the Belleisle, a tributary of the St. John River. Hatfield Point early became a stopping place for steamboats which plied up and down the river. His father was both a farmer and a carriage-builder, and Shirley Jackson learned both trades. He loved keen, sharp tools and could make anything out of wood. In later years he maintained a summer home near his boyhood abode on the land he had worked as a boy. Here he had a regular workshop, and he was often seen building birdhouses or some other such item. His home was more like a club, with the variety of activities it furnished. Several of his colleagues who have been entertained by the Cases during their annual periods of relaxation have also testified to his ability as a cook, especially in making buckwheat pancakes served with genuine maple syrup. His early boyhood experiences on Canadian soil that gave forth its produce only as a result of hard and laborious effort were not such as to inculcate a love of farm life. His own personal reflections concerning these youthful days Dean Case recorded in an article entitled picturesquely, "Living in the Garden of Eden."[1] There is also depicted here some indication of his early religious life and his developing freedom of thought. His parents were members of the Free Baptist church, which had its beginning in Canada in the early part of the last century and represented a type

[1] *Crozer Quarterly*, XXII (1945), 323–26.

of liberalism and open-mindedness to new currents quite unusual for that time.

Shirley Jackson Case began his academic training in his native country. He enrolled in a denominational college which was affiliated with a church other than his own. Contact with students and teachers at this institution led him to a new appreciation of those whom he had earlier been led to oppose. In 1893 this school, Acadia University, awarded him the degree of A.B. and, three years later, that of M.A. These early years, as well as those that followed in secondary-school teaching, were quite formative periods in the life of Shirley Jackson Case. A more complete statement of his early theological development can be found in his article, "Education in Liberalism."[2] His earliest teaching was in the field of mathematics at St. Martin's (New Brunswick) Seminary and Horton Collegiate Academy.

It was in 1897 that he came to the United States and for four years he was located at the New Hampton (New Hampshire) Literary Institution as an instructor in Greek. Only a short distance away was situated the Tilton School, an academy founded by the Methodists in 1845. A graduate in music from this institution, Miss Evelyn Hill, was an accomplished vocalist. She became the teacher of vocal music at New Hampton in 1897. Two years later she became Mrs. Case.

During his last year at New Hampton he had served as pastor of the local community church, and, in order to continue his academic studies, he entered the Divinity School of Yale University. He specialized in biblical courses and gave himself earnestly to the mastery of Hebrew and New Testament Greek. He received his B.D. degree, *summa cum laude*, from this institution in 1904. During the following year he was on the staff of the school

[2] In Vergilius Ferm (ed.), *Contemporary American Theology*, I (New York: Round Table Press, 1932), 105–25.

as an instructor in Greek. His linguistic competence was superior. This facility later came to expression in published translations from Latin, German, and Italian. His continued studies and research at Yale culminated in the acquisition of the Ph.D. degree in 1906. During his first two years at Yale he was pastor of the Congregational Church at Bethany, Connecticut, and for the remaining three years he served the United Church at Beacon Falls. He paid tribute in afteryears to his Yale teachers, Bacon and Porter, by the editing of *Studies in Early Christianity*, a distinguished *Festschrift* in dual honor of the two eminent scholars together.

His first academic appointment after his graduation was to the staff of Bates College as professor of the history and philosophy of religion. While teaching at Bates, Dr. Case submitted an article to the *American Journal of Theology*, a scholarly journal published by the University of Chicago. This was recognized as a valuable essay, and others of equal significance followed. Professor Ernest De Witt Burton, then head of the New Testament Department in the Divinity School, was so impressed by Dr. Case's superior ability that he entered into negotiation for the addition of this young instructor to his staff as assistant professor of New Testament interpretation. Two years after his appointment, Professor Case took a leave of absence for further study at the University of Marburg. During this period of research he came under the influence of the German school, at that time vigorously debating the question of the historicity of Jesus. Dr. Case returned to America to carry on his scholarly work with this background serving to guide his thinking. In 1912 he became editor of the *American Journal of Theology*, a post he held for eight years. Through the medium of this publication he set forth his growing views on the subject of the life of Jesus. Likewise, his first book, published in 1912, was on this same question and was entitled *The Historicity of Jesus*.

As a teacher he was always found to be most capable. For a long number of years he had eight o'clock classes. He was generally seen at his desk well before this time, preparing for the period. He was an able lecturer and presented his material clearly and succinctly. Every lecture was a finished performance. It showed, as did all his productivity, the result of scholarly, scientific, objective, careful work. He had a thorough knowledge of his field and also a deep appreciation for, and knowledge of, the whole classical field of Greek and Roman culture. His concern for students was that they do the best work of which they were capable. He had no patience with shoddy work or the boastful student; he had endless patience with the man who gave his best. He was more of a psychologist than one might think and could well estimate what was in a man. That his standards and his ability were appreciated is shown by the fact that many excellent students majored under Professor Case.

His advancement in the Divinity School continued rapidly and in 1915 he became a full professor in the New Testament Department. During the period of World War I he temporarily returned to teaching mathematics in the University's wartime program. His biblical scholarship continued, with attention being focused in a timely way on problems of early Christian apocalyptic thought, and resulted in the publication of two books, *The Milliennial Hope* and *The Revelation of John*. Before World War I Professor Case had brought out *The Evolution of Early Christianity*, considered by many to be his most important work. It is an account of the beginnings of the church from the environmental and genetic approach. After World War I he extended this method of study vastly in time and scope and developed his distinctive functional and social historical methodology in the field of early Christian history in general, covering the period from the inception of this religious movement to its ultimate triumph and accession to the

position of the sole recognized religion of the Roman Empire. Two comprehensive works covered this period of history, *The Social Origins of Christianity* and *The Social Triumph of the Ancient Church*.

Meanwhile signal recognition continued to come to Dr. Case. It was in 1917 that Yale University had him return to receive the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. This same year was marked by his appointment as professor of early church history as well as of New Testament interpretation. He remained in this dual position for eight years.

In the early part of 1922 he utilized a short leave of absence to take a trip in the Mediterranean area in order to get a firsthand impression of the localities where Christianity had its beginnings and to collect data for his volume, *Jesus: A New Biography*.

The decade beginning with the year 1923 was a most significant period in the life of Professor Case. It began with his appointment to the chairmanship of the Church History Department. The reorganization and enlargement carried on in this part of the Divinity School was one of the great administrative accomplishments of his career. He gathered scholars for his departmental staff from over the United States and Canada. Professor Case, himself, taught the period to A.D. 800. Professor John T. McNeill was called from a professorship of church history at Knox College, Toronto, to be professor of the history of medieval Christianity. His specialty was European church history, particularly during the Middle Ages. For the Renaissance and Reformation Professor W. E. Garrison was competently in charge. The cultural aspects of the Renaissance formed one of his chief points of emphasis. In the area of the post-Reformation and modern periods, Professors Spinka and Lyttle taught and carried on their researches. The history of the Eastern Orthodox church was the distinctive specialty of Professor Spinka. Similarly, Dr. Lyttle

concentrated particularly on the history of modern liberalism in religion. Then, from DePauw University, where he was professor of American history, Dr. William W. Sweet was brought to the Divinity School to be professor of the history of American Christianity. He divided the area into a number of courses on the subject, so that more detailed consideration could be given to the various periods and to developments in particular sections of the land and by individual denominations. Dr. Sweet made many valuable contributions by his independent researches. He used considerable funds to catalogue the original sources of American church history wherever found. This was done with outstanding co-operation by students and alumni of the University. Although he confined his own writing and research to the history of early Christianity, Professor Case was particularly conscious of the need for the development of the American church history field. To this he gave unqualified support, especially in financing various research projects. His Introduction to Sweet's *Religion on the American Frontier*, Volume I: *The Baptists* is a concise statement of his conception of the need for the gathering of the sources in this new and undeveloped area. In addition to the above men, various specialists were brought in as visiting lecturers. These included, among others, Archibald Main, Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the University of Glasgow, and Joseph Ayer of the Divinity School of the Protestant Episcopal church in Philadelphia.

This expansion took place and was accomplished in a period of about two years. It was all a part of a comprehensive plan of Dr. Case to make the Department of Church History at the University of Chicago the leading department of its kind in the country. Here was the largest group of church historians working together in a single department to be found anywhere in the United States, if not in the world. Under Professor Case's stimulating leader-

ship, research projects were at once undertaken, backed by a generous research fund which went forward year by year as long as he was the active head of the department. Dr. Case was one of those rare scholars who could see things in the large, even though he professed competence only in one area. He was fully aware of what needed to be done in fields of research outside his own. He could choose the men needed to cultivate them, but he never tried to control or direct their activities. His great contribution to the work of all the men he had gathered about him was to set an example of high and honest scholarship, to give sound advice when sought but never to force suggestions upon anyone, and to let men work out their own problems, each in his own way. He was an inspiring person who could raise more questions than he answered. There was never any friction or petty jealousies among his colleagues; the department worked as a team, with each member fulfilling his individual responsibilities. It was that which made possible the publication of more than twenty volumes by the Church History Department of the Divinity School by the year 1938 when Dean Case retired.

But Professor Case did not confine himself solely to his own research and to activities in his own school. He was also active in the American Society of Church History and in 1924 was elected its president. At the time, this group was moribund, as near dead as an organization could be and still live. It had less than a hundred members; its publications had lapsed or appeared only on rare occasions; it was limited by charter to the state of New York, met yearly in the metropolis of that state, and was controlled by the professors of church history of the theological seminaries in that immediate area. With the renewed interest in church history at Chicago and other Midwest schools, the American Society of Church History soon instituted reforms that had been too long delayed. This was accomplished under the leadership of Dr. Case,

notwithstanding considerable opposition from the East. The research in American church history, the project begun at the University of Chicago, was transferred to the auspices of the Society. A research committee was formed, with Professor Sweet as chairman. A drive for members was made which resulted in considerable enlargement in membership and effectiveness in operation. The present membership of the organization runs into several hundreds. A journal was begun—*Church History*—which now has a subscription list of well over six hundred. Considerable emphasis was placed on an annual spring meeting to be held in the Midwest. In addition to his term as president, Professor Case served, for many years, in the cabinet of the Society. He was also on the committee of endowment and vested funds, an indication of his ability in financial matters. His papers were always heard with great interest, and in discussion he had no equal in knowledge and in ability to present a point of view.

Professor Case was also instrumental in putting the Church History Club of Chicago on its feet. Prior to his efforts, the group usually had from five to seven members at its meetings. But under his leadership this number was considerably increased, and the activities of the Society began to carry a weighty influence in church history circles.

The appointment of Dr. Case as professor of the history of early Christianity was made in 1925. At the annual business session of the Chicago Society of Biblical Research held in the spring of this year Professor Case was elected president for the term 1925–26. He had been one of the most active members of this group and seldom was he not present at each of the three meetings held during the academic year. Further activity in the Society is evidenced by the fact that he served on various committees of the group and for four consecutive years was the secretary of the organization. He had been elected to membership in 1908 and con-

tinued in this role until his retirement and removal from the Chicago area. During this time he presented his quota of papers which gave the results of researches upon which he was engaged at the various times. The discussions that ensued gave opportunity for the reactions of the members present and an opportunity for Dr. Case to elucidate and crystallize his position further. This was of particular value, since the material in many of these papers appeared subsequently in religious journals or in his books.

The following year saw Professor Case elected to the presidency of the national Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis. His inaugural address made a noteworthy contribution to the study of Messianism. Beginning in 1927 as editor of the *Journal of Religion*, he directed the policy of one of the most influential of the scholarly religious periodicals that are published in America. He made it second to none in the field of religious thought. He held the standards of the journal very high. The articles from the various scholars were the best to be had. It was in this same year that one of his most influential books was published, *Jesus: A New Biography*. This work, incidentally, indicates to a high degree the kind of reaction that has characteristically been stimulated by his scholarly activities. Following its publication the storm of protest to the view of Jesus therein given was swift in rising. Several Chicago papers carried interviews with prominent ministers and religious leaders in the vicinity. On the whole, these were decidedly and strongly opposed to the results of the study. But that in the main Professor Case's conclusions are accepted today by men of a liberal viewpoint is well known.

His next honor came from his alma mater, Acadia University, which awarded him the degree of D.C.L. Professor Case was chairman of the Church History Deputation to the Orient in 1931–32 and directed the survey of the teaching of church history in the mission schools in the Far East. This trip, which carried

him around the world, was under the aegis of John R. Mott. The purpose was to increase the stress being put on the teaching of church history and to facilitate the gathering of source materials. The *Report of the Church History Deputation to the Orient*, published by the International Missionary Council of London and New York, has lasting value and usefulness.

Professor Case was named Dean of the Divinity School in 1933, and for a half-decade he handled in a capable manner the affairs of this part of the University of Chicago. His efforts were directed toward the co-ordination of education in the Divinity School with the main educational trends in other sections of the University. The Old Testament and New Testament departments were merged into the biblical field for the first time in the history of the school. They have since continued to collaborate fully. The seminars which Dean Case had directed before his advancement he continued. One of these was in the field of early Christian archeology. In the later years of his administration, Professor Willoughby began to take over some of these classes. Plans were made for the latter to head up the seminar in archeology after a trip abroad. Upon his return Dean Case directed him to a room which had been set up during the year especially for the archeological collection and for seminars in the subject. This has since been designated by the inscription: "The Early Christian Archeological Seminar Established by Shirley Jackson Case."

As Dean, S. J. Case gave vigorous intellectual leadership to an already strong Divinity faculty; he stepped up its scholarly effectiveness and completely revised and reconstructed the curriculum of the school. He showed remarkably good judgment in selecting young scholars to strengthen a significant faculty and in giving them a free hand in their work. His management of administrative details was amazingly efficient. He abhorred academic red

tape and got rid of as much of it as possible. He gave the school a singularly well-ordered administration. As a personal adviser to his colleagues, he was a personification of kindness and consideration. Habitually he accomplished unadvertised kindness for others where and when there was real need for assistance. Those who knew him well appreciated greatly the distinctive quality of his combined geniality and humor—though one never dreamed of trying to take advantage of these qualities. In his dealings with students, the Dean was invariably more than fair. His sympathetic understanding of student problems made him not only just but exceptionally humane and generous. Also he was definite; the inquiring student never had difficulty in finding out just where he stood in the program of academic procedure. With typical fair-mindedness and loyalty to intellectual standards, he established the merit system in the assignment of scholarships and fellowships. His procedure in this matter was quickly extended to other parts of the University and was further developed by his successor in the Divinity deanship. He organized the orientation course so that men might have a general understanding of religion. By rigorous concentration and well-directed efforts, Dean Case made the short half-decade of his deanship one of the noteworthy developmental periods in the history of the Divinity School.

In 1938 Dean Case retired from the University of Chicago after a period of thirty years of outstanding achievements at this institution. As a conclusion to this activity he made an invaluable report to the American Association of Theological Schools concerning the curricula of such institutions. At the time of his retirement, the colleagues and students of Dean Case collaborated, under the editorship of McNeill, Spinka, and Willoughby, in publishing in his honor a major *Festschrift* entitled *Environmental Factors in Christian History*. His far-reaching scholarly influence was epitomized in the volume. Throughout, it illustrated the per-

spective and method in social-historical research with which his name will remain associated.

His retirement from administrative and teaching responsibilities was short-lived. During the year 1938–39 he was special lecturer on the New Testament at Bexley Hall, an Episcopal theological seminary in Gambier, Ohio. In the following year he moved to Lakeland, Florida, where he became professor of religion at Florida Southern College and dean of the Florida School of Religion. One of the aims of the latter school has been to provide for the teaching of religion to those students who desire to pursue the subject for intelligent and cultural ends. The curriculum was set up with the needs in mind of laymen as well as those studying professionally. Considerable emphasis has been placed on informal guidance as over against formal instruction. In this same year he assisted in the organization of the Florida Religious Association, which has been devoted to religious fellowship, history of religious movements in Florida, and group religious education. In another year, he had begun the publication of *Religion in the Making* and had undertaken the editorship of the journal. Wartime difficulties of publication necessitated the cessation of the periodical in 1943. But Dean Case continued his productive activity both in his educational work and in his numerous books, articles, and reviews. He delivered several series of lectures to various religious groups and did some preaching on occasions. The great intellectual development through World War II was the working-out of a comprehensive and Christian philosophy of history. An adumbration of this was put forth in *Christianity in a Changing World*, and it was lucidly articulated in *The Christian Philosophy of History*.

The last book of Dean Case, *The Origins of Christian Supernaturalism*, demonstrated the contingent character of early Christian interpretations of experience and history in terms of super-

naturalism. In a singularly cogent way, this volume brought up to date the sweeping surveys of data recorded in his *Experience with the Supernatural in Early Christian Times.*

Definitely in prospect at the time of his death was a new volume by Dean Case on the personal religion of Jesus. This would have carried forward a double line of interest that was perennial with him: interest in personal religious experience in general and in the religious experience of Jesus himself in particular. Famous and influential has been the trilogy of books regarding Jesus that Dr. Case published in earlier decades. *The Historicity of Jesus* evaluated contemporary discussion of the question of his historical existence; *Jesus: A New Biography* delineated the historic Jesus of Nazareth; and Christian evaluation of Christ since the crucifixion was elucidated in *Jesus through the Centuries*. The aim of the projected new volume was at the center of Jesus' own religious experience. The sequence of the volumes published and the one proposed was typical of the austere scholarly methodology of Dean Case: to establish historicity first of all, and only thereafter to indicate evaluation.

Amid the congenial surroundings of his Florida home, with citrus groves much in evidence and an inland lake near by, Dean Case continued with amazing alacrity his intellectual accomplishments until the very day that he passed from this life, December 5, 1947. He had returned home after giving his class lectures when he was stricken, leaving behind a small army of colleagues and students and friends who remain profoundly grateful for the great achievements that distinguished his career.

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